

## Preaching the Pope in Belfast

REV. P. J. GANNON, S.J.

*A sermon given in St. Colmcille's Church, Ballyhackmore, Belfast,  
November 10, 1929. Reprinted from the Dublin  
Irish Catholic.*

*Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my  
church (Matt. xvi, 18).*

I AM going to do a daring thing today. I am going to preach the Pope in Belfast. And the reason is that recently in this city his claims have been passionately repudiated in a series of sermons which caused no small stir. Many other points of our belief and features of our worship were also assailed. But I do not mean to dwell on them—first, because I could not do so in a single sermon; and secondly, because the Papal supremacy is central and pivotal, and will largely decide the rest. If we are wrong on it, our whole case is gone, our cause is lost; and it would avail us as little to score a petty triumph on one or all the others as it would help a chess player to capture his opponent's pawns if his king were checkmated (I owe the comparison to Dr. Salmon). Contrariwise, if we are right on it, then all the minor questions raised by Protestant controversialists become of little meaning. They will be found to be largely irrelevant and to leave our position intact. If the Pope is not by right Divine the Vicar of Christ on earth, the Catholic Church errs on fundamentals. If he is, then both the Protestant communities of the West and the Orthodox communities of the East err on fundamentals.

### ISSUE DIRECT AND FUNDAMENTAL

There is no escape from this dilemma. Contradictory propositions cannot both be true. The affirmation of one is the negation of the other. It is necessary to insist on this; for many moderns seem almost to forget it. In no other way can we account for the claim that a Church can be Catholic and Protestant or Protestant and Catholic at the same time. This sounds in our ears as much a contra-

diction in terms as a "Republican-Royalist." We prefer clear-cut definitions, a straight issue, and the principles of logic, to a hazy world of thought, where all sharp colors melt into an undistinguishable gray.

The issue I put today is a straight one. Moreover, it is the fairest of all to our opponents, for it is almost the only one on which they are all united. On other questions of dogma they differ so much among themselves that it is hard to find a label for them as a body. But we can say that they are all anti-Romanists, anti-Papalists. Now, we are Papalists—frank, fearless, and unashamed. Hence no man can quarrel with me if I state our standpoint unequivocally, and endeavor to prove it from that fountain of Revelation which all parties to the dispute acknowledge.

#### THE PRIMACY IN THE BIBLE

And so my thesis runs thus: The New Testament, as read in the Revised Version no less than in the Douay Bible, vouches for the primacy of Peter and his successors in no uncertain manner; and that primacy is one of jurisdiction, not merely of honor, which is the last thing Our Lord, the great Teacher and Exemplar of humility, would have been likely to confer for its own sake.

In other words, I contend that the teaching of Trent on this head is already contained in Holy Writ, though not in its theological terminology, just as the Trinity is contained therein centuries before it received scientific definition at Nicæa and Constantinople. Let us open the Scriptures, then, which we are thought to keep hermetically sealed, and see what we find. Briefly, we find this: Our Blessed Lord founded a community, which He called now a Church, and now a Kingdom. From the larger body of His followers He chose twelve in particular who were to be the head and heart and core of this community. These are known as the Apostles. These He made the High Priests and spiritual rulers of His Kingdom. As this is agreed upon by all with whom we are concerned, we may pass on.

#### AUTHORITY IN CHRIST'S KINGDOM

Let us note first of all that the future community is to be a kingdom, which is to last to the end of time and then

merge into the greater kingdom of God in heaven. Now a kingdom supposes a king, and when one quits the scene another takes his place by some well-defined law of succession. A kingdom without a king is a difficult concept. Nor is the difficulty solved by supposing that the spiritual presence of the founder suffices. If men were angels this might perhaps be feasible. But among men some form of real authority, culminating in a single personage, who ultimately shall have a deciding voice on vexed issues, is the only way yet discovered for avoiding anarchy and chaos. On analogy, then, we might suppose that Jesus, knowing all that was to be, would give His kingdom a king even on earth. And that is just what we discover that He did.

For in the Apostolic College all were not quite equal. Three were peculiarly associated with the Master. These were Peter, James, and John; and Peter most of all. His pre-eminence is so marked that most schismatics concede to him a primacy of honor. But, first, this would be rather meaningless, and, secondly, it does not explain the texts which, taken in their entirety, establish, beyond reasonable doubt, a real headship, as real as any Prime Minister or President enjoys over his Cabinet. This ought to emerge more and more clearly as the argument advances.

#### PETER'S PLACE IN THE GOSPELS

Peter's name occurs more frequently in the New Testament than any other, save only that of his Divine Master. It is found 180 times, while St. Paul's is found 158 times, and St. John's, which comes third, only 38 times. When you remember that the great portion of the Acts is almost a diary of St. Paul's voyages, the significance of these figures is enhanced. In the Gospels alone St. Peter is mentioned 91 times. There are four catalogues of the Apostles, and in all Peter is first named and Judas last. It was Peter, James and John who were privileged to behold the Transfiguration, and the same three in the same order are invited by Jesus to pray with Him in Gethsemane. We meet with such recurring phrases as "Peter and those with him," "Peter and the disciples," close parallels to the still more frequent "Jesus and those with Him," "Jesus and the disciples." It is Peter who walks upon the waters and is miraculously preserved from drowning. It is Peter who

pays the stater of tribute for Jesus and himself. It is from his boat that Jesus preaches to the multitude on the shore. Peter is the spokesman of the Twelve on most occasions.

After Calvary he is obviously the central figure of the group. The apparition to him is held to be decisive. "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon" (Luke xxiv, 34). The angel's message runs: "Go, tell his disciples and Peter" (Mark xvi, 7). When John and Peter go to the empty tomb, the beloved disciple arrives first, but waits for Peter to enter. When Peter, in St. John, ch. xxi, says: "I go afishing," the rest accompany him.

#### IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

In the Acts of the Apostles his prominence is still more remarkable. It has been said that the first twelve chapters might well be called, the "Acts of Peter." The formula for the Apostolic College is "Peter and the Eleven," or "Peter and the rest of the Apostles." It is he who proposes the election of a successor to Judas and presides over it; he who preaches to the multitude on the Day of Pentecost; who works the miracle on the crippled man at the door of the Temple called Beautiful; whose very shadow heals the sick; who, filled with the Holy Ghost, makes answer to the priests; who receives the vision signifying the inclusion of the Gentiles in the Church; who pronounces judgment on Ananias and Saphira—a judgment so sternly sanctioned from on high; who excommunicates Simon, called the father of heresy. His arrest fills the infant Church with consternation, so that it falls upon its knees until he is miraculously released. St. Paul clearly recognizes him as the most important member of the Apostolic body. It was to see him, above all others, he went to Jerusalem, when he wished to explain his special vocation, as one born out of time, and receive the right hand of fellowship. At the Council of Jerusalem, though James, as Bishop of the city, presided, Peter plays the leading part. Finally, it was Peter who ultimately went to Rome, the capital of the empire, and was first Bishop of that city, which loomed larger in the eyes of contemporaries than any other city ever had done before, or, perhaps, shall ever do again.

Now, weigh all this well, and see to what conclusion it points—namely, that Peter was marked out to be the visible representative of Christ when He should return to the Father, and later assumed the role without shadow of dissent.

But note, further, that I have not quoted as yet any one of the three great Petrine texts. These must be considered now, and I will cite from the Revised Version to preclude all strife about slight verbal differences.

#### CHRIST'S SPECIAL PRAYER FOR PETER

In St. Luke (xxii, 31-32), we read: "Simon, Simon, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat; but I made supplication for thee that thy faith fail not; and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren." Here we see a special solicitude on the part of Our Lord for Peter, whose fall he foresees. But His prayer for him will prevail. The faith of Cæsarea Philippi, shaken by Calvary, will be restored; and then it will be his duty to "stablish"—or, as we more simply say, confirm—his brethren. Peter, therefore, is employed by Jesus as the means for bringing back to their belief and trust in Him the rest of the brethren without limitation. Certainly the words as they stand say nothing of future generations. We only deduce from them the fact that Peter receives a commission which is Papal—to confirm, that is, the faith of all the rest.

#### THE PASTORAL COMMISSION

More impressive still is the passage in St. John (xxi, 15-17):

So when they had broken their fast Jesus said to Simon Peter: Simon son of John, lovest thou me more than these? He said unto Him: Yea Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him: Feed my lambs. He saith unto him again a second times: Simon son of John, lovest thou me? He saith unto him: Yea Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him: Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time: Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him: Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him: Feed my sheep.

These are surely striking words, on a most solemn occasion, when Jesus is within a few days of His Ascension. And what do they mean? The Good Shepherd, who had given His Life for His flock, now by triple repetition entrusts His whole flock to Peter, who thus receives a supreme and universal pastoral charge.

And a pastoral charge involves spiritual jurisdiction. Without this no pastor can perform his task. Hence we see Peter entrusted with a strict spiritual jurisdiction over the whole flock of Christ. Nothing less flows from this passage.

"But," say eager objectors, "how do you conclude that this is to be handed on to Peter's successors?" Well, we do not draw that conclusion as necessarily flowing from this passage—that will be done from the next and last. But we may remark even here that, as Christ is equally solicitous for His flock throughout the ages, we might well expect that the supreme pastoral charge would be continued.

#### THE GREAT PETRINE CONFESION

And now we come to those imperishable words that stand emblazoned round the dome of St. Peter's in the city of his martyrdom, as the charter of the Papacy, voicing its claims in terms so explicit that really it is hard to see how schism can challenge them. We shall first see the whole context and then study them in detail. They are found in St. Matthew (xvi, 13-19):

Now when Jesus came into the parts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples saying: Who do men say that the Son of man is? And they said: Some say John the Baptist; some Elijah; and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them: But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I also say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Here we pause. These are Divine words. If anyone denies this, I am not reasoning with him now. They are taken from that volume which Protestants are supposed to

read by day and meditate by night. One may ask do they never suffer nightmare in consequence. For my part, I suspect they must skip them. At least, I cannot see how they can study them without having grave misgivings. Their rule of faith is the Bible, and here are words in the Bible than which clearer or more solemn can hardly be imagined. Their obvious sense is that Christ built His Church on Peter as rock foundation. They lack no element of persuasiveness. Jesus has worked enough wonders to set men eagerly discussing His personality. He has gradually unfolded His Messianic claims. He has prepared the minds of His followers for the fuller and more complete understanding of His Divinity. Now He puts them to the test. The question is addressed to all. But Peter alone replies, in that marvelous profession of faith which sounds across the ages and still challenges the attention of mankind.

#### MEANING OF THE NEW NAME

Thereupon Jesus turns to him in particular and says: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar Jonah; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but by my Father which is in heaven." Then He proceeds: "And I also, whose Divine sonship My Father has revealed to you, I proclaim that thou art no longer Simon but Rock." The very name is an argument. At such a moment Our Saviour was not likely to indulge in a meaningless play on words. The name is symbolical. Simon is declared to be the rock foundation of the future Church, which, just because founded on this rock, shall be inviolate. The gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. Now, whether we understand by this the power of death, or, in a larger and more fitting sense, the powers of evil, the argument remains. The Church is to be indestructible because it is founded upon a rock and not on sand (Cf. Matt. vii, 24-27; Luke vi, 48-49). And Peter is the rock. If there were no more, this were enough.

#### THE PROMISE OF THE KEYS

But there is much more: "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." What a promise from one just pronounced Christ, the Son of the Living God!

What do keys signify? In olden days when a city was beleaguered into submission the citizens came to surrender by offering up the key of the city's gates, thus expressing their acknowledgment of the suzerainty of the conqueror. No figure could be more appropriate or more manifest. Peter is the key-bearer of the kingdom of heaven. It is his to open, his to shut. And, lest there should be any doubt about the fulness of the jurisdiction here implied, Our Lord adds: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven." I ask quite simply what ampler spiritual power can be given to man than these words infer?

#### HOW MODERNISTS EVADE THE ISSUE

But perhaps you will be wondering what answer non-Romanists offer to these proofs drawn from their own rule of faith. Some answers they had to attempt. They are, however, so weak that Liberal Biblical criticism and Modernism have abandoned them altogether and taken up quite new ground. They say the famous passage in St. Matthew is not original, but was added later on by some Greek editor of the First Gospel. And the reason they give is that Christ could not have used such words, seeing that He did not found a Church at all. They belong to a later stage in the evolution of the Christian consciousness. You see at once that these gentlemen beg the question, as they so frequently do, and tear up the sacred record according to their own prejudices. But our reply is twofold. First, the text is in all the MSS and we have no more right to set the MSS aside in the case of the Gospels than in the case of Cicero, or Vergil, or any other profane author. Such a procedure would not be tolerated by classical scholars in their domain for a single instant. And, secondly, this passage bears every internal indication of being primitive. In its whole tone and texture, it is Hebraic, and not Greek. No later Greek forger, if we conceive such a miscreant, could have penned this message. It is Aramaic from the first word to the last. But I am not here reasoning with those Liberal critics who degrade the Word of God to the level of profane literature, and then proceed, as one writer has put it, to melt it down to a gelatinous mass of pudding as innutritious as it is indi-

gestible. I only quote them at all to show that, if you do not tamper with the sacred text, men as ingenious as Professor Harnack saw no way of escaping from the Roman interpretation of them.

#### ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO ANSWER

But what of those pious Christians who receive the text as handed down to us and revere it as sacred, and yet reject the Pope, what reply do they make? Well, first, they say that not "Peter" but "the faith of Peter" is what Christ meant by the Rock. This is a very favorite explanation. The profession of Christ's Divinity, behold the basis of all! Now, we admit that the Divinity of Christ is the basic dogma of Christianity, and we add, not without a smile of irony, that outside the Church founded on Peter that great truth is hardly anywhere safeguarded today. It is left to Peter, who first made the profession, to stand unequivocally for it still and strike with stern anathemas all who tamper with it. (And there are quite a number among professing Christians who do so.) But as a serious piece of Scriptural commentary the view which substitutes for "Peter" "the faith of Peter" is entirely impossible. The profession of faith was the reason why Christ renamed Simon into Rock and built His Church on that Rock. But the Rock was Peter and Peter was the Rock, and the words that follow prove this to the point of evidence. For how could the faith of Peter wield the keys of the kingdom of heaven or pronounce decisions binding or loosing on earth and in heaven? This difficulty is so great that our opponents here fly to the Fathers for refuge, and, with the aid of a learned Gallican named De Launoi, they produce various passages from their works that seem to support the forced interpretation given above. To this maneuver I say, first—if time permitted I could refute the argument in detail—but, above all, I say: "*You* at least have no right to appeal from the plain, straightforward words of Holy Writ to that Church Tradition which you repudiate when it is brought against you on other points. You cannot have it both ways."

#### A VAIN APPEAL TO ST. PAUL

Most of all, however, Protestant apologists appeal to St. Paul, whose words and deeds they cite as incompatible

with Peter's supremacy. They quote (I Cor. x, 4): "And the rock was Christ." But the context will show that these words are utterly irrelevant. The Apostle reminds the Jews that "They did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ." You will observe that the words are elusive, symbolical, and difficult—so difficult that we can understand St. Peter's warning about "our beloved brother, Paul," in whose Epistles "are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest as *they do* also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction" (II Peter iii, 16). The Apostle's meaning would appear to be that the water which issued from the rock touched by Moses was a figure of the water of grace issuing from the side of Christ. Now, what has this to say to our present inquiry? Just nothing.

Equally beside the point, though at first sight more impressive, are those other words of the same Epistle to the Corinthians. "For other foundation no man can lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Cor. iii, 11). You may easily hear these words invoked triumphantly against the Petrine claims. Yet surely there is no logic whatever in the argument. Let us suppose for the moment that the words *did* contradict Our Lord's own utterance at Cæsarea Philippi, which statement should prevail—that of the Divine Master or of the disciple? But there is no contradiction. For, first, Peter the Rock is only the still more basic rock which is Jesus Christ, perpetuated in visible form after the Ascension. Peter is Vicar of Christ, and a vicar's authority derives entirely from him who appoints him to take his place. The Governor General of the Six Counties does not dethrone the King because he represents his authority visibly in your midst. If a man were to exclaim: "There is no king but George," would he, therefore, invalidate the King's own commission appointing the Duke of Abercorn? Put thus, the argument is seen in its nudity and absurdity.

But, further, St. Paul in that passage is really only asserting that in building the edifice of salvation in the souls of individuals we must lay as a foundation the faith of Christ. Now who questions that? Or how does it clash with the "Thou art Peter" on the lips of Christ Himself?

### AN ILLOGICAL INFERENCE

Finally, they cite the Epistle to the Galatians: "But when Cephas came to Antioch I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back, and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision" (Gal. ii, 11-12). How often these words have been made to carry a weight of logical inference that breaks the back of them! Paul reproached Peter for a certain line of conduct that seemed to him wanting in courage and firmness. Therefore, Paul did not admit the jurisdiction of Peter. Let me supply the suppressed minor of this truncated syllogism. "But no inferior could, under any circumstances, reproach a superior in this way without denying his jurisdiction." The answer to that in form is simply: I deny it outright.

In a life of Bellarmine just published we read how this most intransigent of all defenders of Papal claims addressed to the various Popes of his time—whom he loved and revered—warning, reproaches, and exhortations far surpassing in apostolic freedom anything Paul can have said to Peter. Thus this Pauline passage also melts away as a difficulty against our teaching. Nay, it loses much of its force if we do not regard the words of rebuke as directed to one whom Paul held in reverential awe.

### DURATION OF CHRIST'S PROMISE

Lastly, some disputants, driven from one position to another, say that even if Peter was Primate in his life-time it would not follow that his successors inherited the position. But let us get back to the words: "On this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Peter was martyred by Nero some thirty years afterwards. Did Christ's prophecy extend to thirty years, and no more? Did the gates of Hades, in the thoroughly typical person of Nero, bring the Saviour's plan and prophecy to naught? If any Christian holds that, he is beyond reach of any argument of mine. And if he does not, where can he see any vestige of its fulfilment, save in Rome?

And now I have done. I have given you the Scriptural argument for Papal supremacy as fully as time permitted.

I have met all the objections against it that I am acquainted with. I have no foolish notion that anything I could say will end the strife of four centuries. But I think it will enable you to give reason for the faith that is in you, and it ought to cause fair opponents to pause before they declare our faith unscriptural.

## The Catholic Woman in Modern Times

MRS. FRANCIS E. SLATTERY

*A radio address given over station WNAC, Boston, during the Catholic Truth Hour, on December 29, 1929, by the President of the League of Catholic Women.*

**I**N this season of supreme rejoicing our eyes are turned in imagination to the crude crib in the rough stable in Bethlehem where Christ, the God-man, was born of the Virgin Mary. He became man to redeem us all, made the supreme sacrifice on the Cross, and Mary was with Him to the agonizing end.

What a change has come over the civilized world since that awful event. Not one cross but millions are scattered over the face of the earth in devotion to Him who saved us, and Mary has become the model for all Christian women.

### WOMAN'S RANK RAISED BY THE CHURCH

Two thousand years ago woman was generally a slave and man her master. Under the impulse of the Church established by Christ through the Apostles, woman is now gloriously free. This change was not a matter of a moment or of years or of generations, but rather the growth of centuries. Down through recorded history from the days of the Apostles, the Catholic Church has sought by official decrees, by her teachings, by her writings, and by the force of her traditions, to elevate woman to a place fitting for the mother and companion of men. She has constantly held before the eyes of all the beautiful pictures of Christ and His Mother, encouraging an emulation of their beautiful relations, and planting in the minds of the generations that followed, the urge to set up in Christian homes the practices of the Holy Family.

So it came about that men established higher values in their relations with other men and raised woman to a new plane of dignity and virtue. Men no longer were masters but defenders of women. Men treated them no longer as chattels, but as equals, and in the struggle of life ever sought to raise them to the highest places of honor and respect. Did time permit, it would be interesting to trace this evolution of woman down through almost 2,000 years and find the hand of the Catholic Church always pointing the way.

Today, after the Church, the greatest single influence for the good

of the people, for the protection of their morals and the preservation of their spiritual ideas is woman. In all the activities of human endeavor her influence is striking and impressive. Under the authority of her husband, she rules the Christian home, she influences the standards of the community, she leaves her impress upon the works of the State. In the arts, in sciences, in politics, in religion, in industry and trade and community movements, her influence cannot be discounted today. Yes, her influence is great, but is it properly effective? Is it fully used? Are we women alive to our responsibilities and opportunities? In other words, are we doing our full duty to our God and our country? Let us see.

It is obvious that we are living in an era of violent changes, some of them fundamental—that are upsetting the accepted practices of years. It should be equally obvious, though I fear it is not sufficiently appreciated or understood, that the new ideas are tending to lower our ideals, to injure our morals and above all to lessen and even to destroy our faith in God and our country.

#### NEED OF HER INFLUENCE TODAY

What are we women doing to influence public thought, to build up a real public conscience, to make a better America, to develop a higher Christianity? Almost nothing! Let us abandon our negative attitude and take a positive stand on matters that are vital to our individual and national well-being.

To be specific, are we content with conditions on the stage and screen? Are we indifferent to the violent attacks on the family and the home: divorce, trial and companionate marriage, birth control and the aims of the Feminist movement? Are we satisfied with our public educational system that forgets God in its scheme? Have we no concern with a Federal movement that menaces the inherent rights of parents and the welfare of their children? Have we no interest in the causes and cures of the appalling crimes that seem to multiply with the days? Shall we do nothing to wipe out prejudice and bigotry, apparently so deeply rooted in some sections of the land? Shall we sit idly by and watch with mere curiosity the growth of these movements, from without and within, that are calculated eventually to weaken and destroy our belief in God?

These are largely moral issues and touch the very soul of the nation. Upon their solution depends the future of our country. If solved aright, America will continue to hold her high place of leadership among the nations of the earth; if wrongly, she will slide down the chute of grievous error to the lowlands of disgrace and chaos.

Here, then, is our duty and our opportunity. Men, God bless them, are our natural guides and protectors in most things, but in matters of morals, women should be leaders, not merely followers. It is our particular province to stress the moral virtues, to uphold the moral standards, to develop the underlying principles, spread a knowledge of them in the public mind, and insist upon their application to the great political and ethical issues of the present day.

### STAGE AND SCREEN

The stage and screen should be thoroughly cleansed, without the aid of new laws, if it can be done; but with the full assistance of the police power if it becomes necessary. In former days the whipping post would have been too good for those perverted playwrights who dip their salacious pens in filthy fluids. Plentiful doses of soap and hot water are needed to scour the dirty mouths of those actors who degrade humanity by their misuse of the blessings of speech. Sex problems, plain smut, the glorification of adultery, the praise of abortion and other violations of the laws of God and man, furnish the themes of these modern intellectuals, so-called. These nauseous conditions will disappear quickly, if the women of the land once raise the big stick. We must organize to fight these barnyard tactics. If those in control will not act, we women will. . . .

All honor to these good men, writers, managers, and actors, who are striving to hold up the standards for the good of all. Their pens are dipped in the sunlight of decency and their hearts and tongues are clean, wholesome, and sweet.

### DEFENSE OF THE HOME

The heart of the nation is in the home, where it beats happily in peace and contentment, however the winds blow outside and the storms beat against it. Our home is a castle, made legally impregnable to intruders, even as the feudal barons of old were protected by the moat and the great gates and walls. Yet, as in those days they were occasionally taken by ruse and deceit and assault, so are our castles in danger from insidious and powerful enemies. The methods and weapons are different. They now seek to enter under cover of present and proposed laws which have a semblance of authority and a guise of assistance. Their aim is to destroy the family and family life. Under their attack the castle weakens and Bolshevism enters.

Are you familiar with the purpose of the so-called Equal Rights Bill which, under the guise of emancipating woman, attempts to make her the competitor rather than the companion of man? This proposal, if enacted into law, would wipe off the statute books all those humanitarian safeguards that are now thrown around woman for her physical, mental, and social welfare. It would even separate the identities of husband and wife and, by retention of her unmarried name, encourage the use of separate domiciles; measures calculated to deprive the children of a protecting home influence and sending the family to the four winds. If this appears to be exaggerated, listen to the words of one of the leaders sponsoring this proposal: She says, "There is a greater freedom that woman must gain—the freedom of social relations. I do not believe in mother's love. I believe in mother's intelligence." And listen to these words of the President of this same organization: "The State must assume the entire responsibility of the maintenance and education of children until they become of age." And the words of one more leader: "The child should be taken from its mother at the age of two or three weeks and placed under the supervision of some one capable

of training it." Vanished is the beautiful mother's love, vanished is the family, vanished is the mother. O, progress! what crimes are attempted in thy name.

#### COMBATING FALSE SEX ETHICS

But an even greater problem confronts the home. If these so-called leaders of thought have their way, the problem of children and their up-bringing will eventually cease to be a problem at all, because there will be no children. Those who preach birth control can hardly appreciate what they are doing. If their propaganda succeeds and their plans are carried out, the laughter and joy of the sweet little ones will no longer be existent in the American home and the heavy silence of despair will come into its own. We Catholic women know that the practice they advocate is contrary to the laws of God and nature, and we stand firm and determined against its practice and its sanction in the law. We know also that it is un-American, because no less distinguished an authority than the late President Roosevelt called it race suicide, and race suicide means the destruction of the American people, even as the nations of antiquity were destroyed by its ravages. Thus our castle would become a tomb.

I cannot tell you the unspeakable things that are taught in many of our colleges and schools—some of them in this leading Commonwealth—about sexual relations and marriage practices. Decent people do not even mention these things, while the indecent are spreading them amongst the youth of the land with diabolical consequences. Every possible means is sought to break down our ideals, and now we find these destroyers of virtue advocating trial and companionate marriages and even exalting free and promiscuous love. Would that another Joan d'Arc might ride through the land marshalling all the forces of our right-thinking, right-living women, to overwhelm this destructive minority.

Finally, the attack is on marriage itself, the very basis of the Christian family and the American home. Divorce is rampant. Its numbers are appalling. The consequent effects on the children are beyond the power of description. Instead of making divorce harder, these enemies of the home are striving to make it easier, by multiplying the causes for divorce. We have now the invidious distinction of leading the civilized world in the number of our divorces. But if these people have their way, we shall soon fall from that high estate, because, the easier the divorce the greater the contempt of marriage, and finally the abandonment of marriage itself. To us Catholics, marriage is not merely a civil contract with all the obligations that contractual relations imply, but a sacramental state, under Divine sanction, in the words of Christ, "Whom God has joined together, let no man put asunder." Divorce has no place in the life of a practical Catholic, but in the interest of Christianity and the preservation of the State, we hope to see divorce made more difficult under the laws of all the States. Let us safeguard marriage and save civilization itself.

### MEETING ANTI-RELIGIOUS TEACHING

Education and religion are the great pillars of civilized society. They guarantee the strength and stability of the State. Neither will suffice alone. Those who attack religion will agree that education is a necessity in the life of democracies, while the heart and conscience of America echo the beautiful sentiments of the great Father of this Country when he said: "Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principles." Religion is attacked on all sides. There are many organizations founded to advance the cause of atheism, into whose ranks have poured thousands of the so-called intelligentsia of the land. Have we mothers any doubt there is a God, that man has a soul, and that our destiny is not of this world, but of the next? This is no time to argue the truth of a fact recognized for centuries by the overwhelming sentiment of civilization and accepted in the Christian religion for twenty centuries. It is, however, the time to face the facts that lie clearly before our eyes. This anti-religious movement must be stopped and stopped now, before its baneful effects are visited upon the youth of the present day and of the days to come. Are the women of America aware of the propaganda against religion, in every State in the Union, in every community, in societies, clubs, schools, colleges and universities; wherever propaganda can spill its poison successfully?

It is surprising, but it is true, that education, too, is losing its hold upon the great masses, largely because it is misdirected and not well-rounded. Education that passes over the soul of the individual and works only on his mind is not true education, and is not sufficient to sustain the high level of American citizenship, attained when religion and education were combined to turn out a finished product—the cultured, God-fearing American gentleman. Secularization of education may have been a natural evolution in our life, but it has left us with a problem in both religion and education that must be solved if the America we love is not soon to be the prey of these un-American enemies who crave to destroy her.

### GUARDING FAMILY RIGHTS

Let us see how they work. Watch their scheming in the capital city of the nation, where their lobbyists seek by cajolery and camouflage to secure the passage of laws, innocent in appearance, but, in reality, tending to take control of education in the States and to interfere in the functions of the home and the family. For examples of this maneuvering I ask you to recall the so-called Child Labor Amendment, the Maternity Act and the Federal Education Bill. Women of all classes and creeds in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, scenting the perils in the Child Labor Amendment, organized in opposition and, to their everlasting credit, with the aid of the high-minded men of this State, succeeded in defeating this Amendment by the overwhelming vote of three to one, to be followed by the other States of the Union, until its ratification was soundly refused.

The same patriotic forces in this State and throughout the land have fought the Maternity Act and the Federal Education Bill with conspicuous success, and will continue to fight until their sponsors retire from the battle. These measures touch upon great moral issues which are, or should be, the special concern of women, and will never be settled until they are settled right. They threaten our home, our castle, and they cast a deepening shadow over the eternal life to come. To borrow the words of the indomitable General Nivelle, "They shall not pass."

#### CRIME AND ITS CAUSES

Crimes and criminals have occupied the attention of the public mind for some considerable time. The overwhelming increase in crimes, the degree and revolting character of many of them, have caused the whole American nation to shudder at the headlines of the papers carrying the news from day to day. This situation has become so bad that many commissions, official and unofficial, under the Federal Government and in the several States have been organized to study their causes and cure, resulting in reports innumerable. But the terrible conditions continue and even grow worse. Women are especially interested and want to know the whys, the wherefores and the whats.

It seems apparent that one of the primary causes is the weakening of the hold of religion on the American people. Without religion there can be no proper sanction for morals, and, without a high standard of morals, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain the moral tone of the nation so highly developed when religion was in its fullest flower. Statistics seem to prove that some sixty per cent of the people of this nation have no church affiliations whatever—a truly regrettable condition. Of course, it should be granted that a great majority of these are men and women of religious convictions who still believe in God and the moral law, but it cannot be successfully controverted that they would be better men and women, better citizens of our country, if, from time to time, they sought the solace offered by their particular religious denomination and felt directly the influence of the precepts taught upon the conduct of their own lives. We all need stimulus for right thinking and right living, for ourselves and for those near and dear to us. We feel that the more religion there is in the homes of the nation, the better our people will be. We Catholics regret to see our friends of other faiths yielding to the indifferentism of the age, and I solemnly pray, however feeble my voice may be, that the women of America will rouse their husbands, brothers and sons especially, from their lethargy and inertia to the end that this land may witness the spectacle of a great army of our citizens returning to their churches, in solemn tribute to the Eternal God and to the welfare of this glorious country of ours.

Another serious cause for crime, especially among our young people, is the lessening of the parental influence. With the advent of the auto, movies, jazz, night clubs, and the other distractions of the present day, the whole world seems to have speeded up. The bars have been let down and practices that were abhorrent in former

days have become the accepted things. The result has been a breaking down of home life and a scattering of the family to outside diversions and temptations, which, in turn, have led the weaker members into crime. If parents will only come back to the old-fashioned things and keep a firm hold on the boy and girl, building up their characters intensively as the years roll on, we shall see less of crime and more of correct conduct. And, if they will go one step farther, and see that their education is advanced in school and college where high ideals are taught and not humbug philosophy, and pernicious practices, they will present to America stalwart, high-minded citizens, ready to carry on for the good of the nation and the glory of the flag.

#### IGNORANCE THE BASIS OF BIGOTRY

In recent months we saw State arrayed against State, section against section, communities against communities, and even families against families under the pernicious stimulus of religious bigotry—a dark picture for our dear America.

It has halted the progress of our nation and threatens its future. It is all because of misunderstandings handed down through many generations. It is because we do not know one another as we actually are, but rather accept the picture painted for us by others. We need a better knowledge of the aims and purposes of all, and the more intimate we are, the closer our contacts, the sooner the mist of misunderstanding will disappear before the beautiful sun of truth, and we shall all stand revealed as common worshipers of God and lovers of America.

You all, my dear radio friends, are devoted to Him who gave us His Only Begotten Son to save us. So am I. You all, I am certain, love America and will sacrifice freely for her. No different from you am I. You of the North want to see the South prosper and progress. The South, I believe, holds the same sentiments for you. You of the West rejoice in the happiness of the people of the East. Surely, they feel the same about you. There must be no North, no South, no East, no West, no sectionalism, no divisions, but a united America working together for one purpose, the preservation of American ideals and the common good of all. These are my sentiments, they are the sentiments of the women of my Faith. They must be the sentiments of all good men and women, because they were planted in the souls of us all by the Creator of all things, the good God who reigns on high. This season of "Peace on earth, good will to men" is an appropriate time to accept the beautiful message of Christmas in the full richness of its meaning and resolve to dedicate ourselves to the glorious task of solidifying the American people into one great brotherhood of man, under the Fatherhood of God.

These, my dear friends, are some of the things that have engaged the attention of the League of Catholic Women of Boston. Under the impulse of our great Churchman and distinguished citizen, Cardinal O'Connell, we have cooperated with all who have sought to maintain our national ideals. Out of it has come a better understanding and mutual respect.

Let us think less of our rights and more of our responsibilities. Let us try to appreciate the full scope of our duties as happy citizens

of the greatest country in the world. Our Declaration of Independence is one of the great documents of all history, exalting and protecting the rights of man. Our Federal and State Constitutions, with our practice of local self-government, have given us the greatest framework of government in modern times. We have natural resources, and wealth and citizenship beyond compare. We are a happy, peaceful and contented people. To be an American citizen is to be a king. Yet all these things we owe to God Himself, our Creator and our Redeemer. Let us not fail in our full duty to Him and in so doing we shall not fail America. Let us turn our thoughts back once again in adoring reverence to that humble manger in Bethlehem. Let us fashion ourselves to the model of the Holy Family. Let us bow our heads in deepest reverence to the Cross of Christ and raise our arm in salute to the flag of flags—the Stars and Stripes of America.

## Announcing the Catholic Periodical Index

READERS of the CATHOLIC MIND will welcome the announcement that it has been selected for indexing in the *Catholic Periodical Index*, beginning March, 1930. The *Catholic Periodical Index* is an author-and-subject index to the contents of more than forty leading Catholic periodicals in the fields of literature, education, science, philosophy, theology, missions, religion, history, liturgy, and current events. This new indexing service is being taken by libraries of the colleges, universities, seminaries, and high schools, as well as public libraries in all parts of the United States and abroad.

The uses of this index are many and varied. Aside from constant use by research workers, it is conspicuously useful in enabling educators to keep abreast of all current literature upon subjects in which they may be most interested.

The arrangement is both unique and simple. It is issued quarterly as a paper-bound magazine. Each issue indexes current magazine material by subject and author, citing the exact publication, issue, and page upon which the article may be found. The index cumulates at the end of the year at a December number which will replace all previous issues. Every third year a large cumulation will appear containing an index for the three-year period in one alphabet.

Thus readers of the CATHOLIC MIND may easily locate material that has appeared therein. Numerous cross-references and sub-headings simplify its use. This is the first time such indexing service has been available for Catholic-periodical readers. Its appearance will undoubtedly lead to a much greater use of this rich field of information on Catholic thought and practice.

The *Catholic Periodical Index* is similar in form to the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature*, which is in most public libraries. With this new indexing service, the readers of the CATHOLIC MIND will find additional reason for preserving and binding completed volumes of our publications.

The *Catholic Periodical Index* is issued by the Library Section of the National Catholic Educational Association, and it will be printed by the H. W. Wilson Company, of New York City. Further information may be secured by addressing the Editor, F. E. Fitzgerald, Librarian of St. Thomas College, Scranton, Pa.